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SPECTRUM COALITION ENDORSES McCain PROPOSAL ON DIGITAL TV
*Public Safety Organizations across the Nation Strongly Support Effort to Ensure Digital TV Transition
by 2007 to Meet Public Safety's Critical Spectrum Needs*

Washington, DC – The Spectrum Coalition for Public Safety today announced its' strong support for U.S. Senator John McCain's proposal to ensure that Digital TV transition is complete by April 2007. If enacted, the legislation will provide organizations a date certain to begin using spectrum for public safety purposes.

"The 9-11 Commission included in its' recommendations the immediate need for additional spectrum for public safety and this legislation will help meet those needs," said Robert LeGrande, Chair of the Spectrum Coalition for Public Safety. "The recent disaster in the Gulf Coast demonstrated with tragic results that public safety organizations still have unmet needs, including the ability to communicate between jurisdictions and organizations – communication that is critical in times of crisis."

"By ensuring that Digital TV transition is complete by 2007, public safety organizations will be able to begin to deploy interoperable communications systems and know when these life saving systems can be utilized to meet the safety needs of the public in the event of an emergency," added LeGrande. "Some regions, including the National Capital Region, will be ready to deploy systems in the 700 MHz band by mid 2006. This earlier date closes the gap in freeing up the much needed spectrum. Continued delay puts lives at risk."

While current legislation will create a date certain for the transition of Digital TV there remains a critical unmet need for public safety – a delay in scheduled spectrum auctions to allow studies from the Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Communications Commission of the need for additional public safety spectrum to be considered. The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 called for these specific steps, and Federal, State and local governments have been working diligently on needs analysis and report input.

Next week, the Spectrum Coalition will release a White Paper identifying the band optimal for wireless public safety networks (700 MHz) and quantifying the amount of bandwidth that Congress must allocate for broadband public safety (30 MHz). These requirements have been determined from real-world lessons learned from Coalition Member Washington, DC, who is currently running a 12 site city-wide wireless broadband network for first responders in the District of Columbia.

The Spectrum Coalition for Public Safety is a national coalition of cities, states, and public safety associations organized to secure additional spectrum in the 700 MHz range to support critical public safety wireless applications. In this era of Code Orange warnings, the capacity to rapidly deploy high-speed wireless applications is absolutely essential in meeting the public safety and homeland security needs of the nation and its capitol.

High-speed wireless technologies provide critical public safety and homeland security applications: chemical/biological alarms, remote video monitoring at command sites, video information for officers on patrol, cross-jurisdictional database messaging, and ambulance-hospital video links.

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